



# Grounding Lessons in Standards

## Why go this route?

- To get started on the “standards journey” in a way that’s not overwhelming—by tying a single, familiar lesson to Michigan’s standards.
- To focus lessons on content or skills identified in state or district expectations for a given grade level.
- To sharpen teachers’ ability to identify for students exactly what they need to do in order to succeed.
- To give students a chance to experience success at a level comparable to their peers.

## You’ll know you’ve arrived when...

- Lesson plan format includes identified benchmarks or grade-level expectations.
- Teachers discipline themselves to identify specific grade-level expectations and assess those elements, even when teaching familiar lessons.
- Student assessment data is recorded in terms of grade-level expectations, and follows the student from teacher to teacher.
- Staff members have at-hand the materials they need to reference Grade-Level Expectations when preparing a lesson.
- Staff members have committed to each other to use expectations-based lesson plans as part of their shared practice... or have identified the barriers to doing that and steps to resolving the problems.

## Construction Zone

Consider using this packet with a grade-level team of teachers who agree to work through this process with 1-3 familiar lessons. Then discuss together what worked well, what didn’t, and how to smooth out the process so it can become a mutual expectation for lesson planning.



## It’s About TIME

- If you are adapting a familiar lesson, an hour or two will be needed.
- If you are starting fresh to develop a new lesson, these steps may take an hour or so, but then you’ll need to continue with the full lesson-planning process outlined in Packet 5:5.




## Potential COSTS

- No additional costs.

## The Process

A step-by-step guide  
to grounding lesson  
design in standards.

**NOTE:** Steps marked with a  are accompanied by one or more inserts, included in this packet.

### 1 Get a shared understanding of standards

MI-Map Packet 6:1 *Planning Your Move Toward Standards—Based Curriculum* includes some background information that may be useful. INSERT A for Step 1 offers a set of discussion questions to help clarify your group's starting place, and INSERT B lists sources of downloadable information if you need it. Agree with each other how many lessons you'll each experiment with... and when you'll come together to discuss your experience.

### 2 Start by adapting lessons you've taught before. It's important for lesson-planners to understand that lessons grounded in Grade-Level Content Expectations aren't a language they've never spoken.

INSERT for Step 2 is a worksheet on which teachers can jot objectives they've used for a familiar lesson... In Steps 3–6 they can crosswalk them to expectations to see if anything changes. Or you can also use Steps 3–6 to begin planning for a new lesson.

### 3 Identify expectations for the lesson. Find these among Michigan's Grade-Level Content Expectations for your grade.

MI-Map Packet 5:3 *Knowing Your Goals—Standards and Expectations* leads you through a process of fitting Michigan's goals for your children into your own plan for this year with these students. Take time to use that if you can. Or... for the purposes of trying this process out, just select 2-3 items from your Grade Level Content Expectations that fit well with the lesson you're adapting. (The MI-Map disk and website include K-8 GLCE's in an Excel spreadsheet format).

### 4 Develop a student performance task that will assess mastery of the standards you've chosen.

Because "addressing" expectations includes "assessing" their mastery, it's important to start with a clear sense of what students will do to demonstrate mastery. INSERT A for Step 4 is a worksheet for brainstorming possible tasks and selecting one. INSERT B is a menu of possible products to jog your memory while brainstorming. INSERT C provides instructions for constructing a rubric that clarifies criteria for both students and teachers. Design the rubric to judge various aspects of the expectations you're assessing. INSERT D is a sample rubric.

### 5 Build the lesson students will need to be able to succeed at the performance task.

MI-Map Packet 5:4 *Knowing Your Options—Instructional Strategies* offers a lesson-planning process and template, also included here as INSERT for Step 5. Or just use your usual lesson plan format for now. Choose instructional methods that engage students, and give them some kind of practice with feedback before they attempt the performance task as a demonstration of what they've learned.

### 6 Record students' mastery levels in a way that allows you and future teachers to understand what each has and hasn't achieved.

This means that assessment data should be keyed to particular expectations, not just to assignments. If you don't have an expectations-based tracking system, see MI-Map Packet 5.3 *Knowing Your Goals—Standards and Expectations* which tells how to access MI-Map's Excel spreadsheets customized to your grade and discipline content expectations. INSERTS A and B for Step 6 explain how to record the rubric results for the particular standard you're assessing.

### 7 Discuss your experience with grade-level colleagues.

The idea here is that you, as a team, will work toward incorporating standards-based lesson planning into your mutual expectations. To do that, you need frank discussion about what works and what doesn't when you try it. Problem solve together. Insert for Step 7 offers questions to focus your discussion.

## Getting more mileage from tying lessons to standards

*How practicing the skill of tying lessons directly to benchmarks or Grade-Level Content Expectations benefits your school in regard to the following initiatives:*

### **No Child Left Behind (NCLB)**

- NCLB uses Michigan's MEAP scores as its measure of student achievement. Aligning your curriculum with the standards and expectations of the Michigan Curriculum Framework (on which MEAP is based) is a first step to being sure students are working at the things they'll be assessed on.

### **Education YES!**

- Michigan's school report cards also use MEAP scores as one of their measures of school performance. Aligning curriculum—lessons and units—to expectations from the Michigan Curriculum Framework gives students the best chance to excel on that measure.

### **MI-Plan**

- Step 6, pages 25-47 is *Aligning the State of Michigan Requirements, Action Plans and Assessments*. This step addresses the state's Benchmarks and Expectations, and guides a school in thinking through its action plans from that point of view. A self-evaluation process for looking at strategies is included, using a strategies/interventions rubric.



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## Resources

### Books

#### ***Using Data To Improve Student Achievement.***

**Deborah Wahlstrom. Successline Publications. Chesapeake. VA 1999.**

High Priority schools that attended Deb Wahlstrom's Michigan Department of Education seminars during 2002–2003 were highly impressed with her practical approach to aligning assessments with curriculum and instruction...and with her tools—including rubrics like the one included here—for classroom assessments.

#### ***Assessing Student Outcomes.***

**Marzano, Robert, et al. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). Alexandria. VA 1993.**

Practical step-by-step advice for constructing performance tasks focused on multiple content and process standards.

### People

#### **Specialists**

Most Intermediate School Districts have a specialist working with schools on curriculum alignment in their service areas.

#### **Coaches**

The *Alliance for Building Capacity in Schools* website lists coaches whose training has been provided by Michigan State University and supported by the Michigan Department of Education. Some are active in aligning curriculum in Michigan schools. Please visit:

[www.abcscoaches.org](http://www.abcscoaches.org)

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